

Congresswoman Manages Rule Setting Debate for Fiscal Year 2010 Energy and Water Appropriations

Today, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) spoke on the House floor on behalf of the House Committee on Rules to advocate for passage of the Energy and Water Appropriations Conference Report.

Congresswoman Matsui's statement, as prepared for delivery, are as follows: "When we think about the long-term health of our country the Energy and Water Appropriations bill is one of the most important bills that we consider. The conference report before us today will keep communities safe from flooding, invest in clean energy and renewable technologies, fight nuclear proliferation, and create jobs through infrastructure development. Without this bill millions of homes would be exposed to devastating floods. Clean energy research that will power the next generation of money-making technologies would stop. Nuclear weapons proliferation would pick up again. And the pace of job creation in the clean-energy sector would slow to a crawl or even stop altogether. These are the reasons why today's conference report is so important..."

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CONTACT: Mara Lee

(202) 225-7163

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Rep. Doris Matsui Speaks on House Floor Advocating for Flood Protection

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) spoke on the House floor on behalf of the House Committee on Rules to advocate for passage of the Energy and Water Appropriations Conference Report. Congresswoman Matsui's statement, as prepared for delivery, is below:

"When we think about the long-term health of our country the Energy and Water Appropriations bill is one of the most important bills that we consider. The conference report before us today will keep communities safe from flooding, invest in clean energy and renewable technologies, fight nuclear proliferation, and create jobs through infrastructure development."

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“In the field of energy the conference report fulfills Congress’s promise to chart a new path for our national energy policy. The conference agreement provides \$27 billion for the Department of Energy to help fund clean energy development and perform basic scientific research. It devotes millions of dollars to solar energy development, advanced vehicle technologies, energy-efficient buildings, and biofuels that can be grown right here at home.

“When we make our own fuel, we create domestic jobs and also take steps toward becoming energy-independent. We recognized this fact in the Energy and Commerce Committee when we wrote the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which is why I am pleased to see these provisions part of today’s conference report.

“This appropriations bill also funds a number of applied research grants at the Department of Energy for potentially high-reward activities like fusion energy, high-energy physics, and biological research. Future generations will look back at these investments and thank us for having the foresight to recognize that one generation’s long-term research, is future generations’ short-term gain.

“Many of my colleagues will be satisfied to know that the conference report also devotes resources to fossil fuel-based energy that can provide a boost to our energy independence efforts in relatively short order. \$672 million is provided for research and development into things like carbon capture and sequestration, natural gas recovery, and unconventional petroleum research activities. This research will benefit independent petroleum producers, and could also help make our country more energy-independent for the short term. Also to that end, the conference report takes a responsible approach toward nuclear energy by investing in fuel cycle research and development.

“By providing more than \$700 million for nuclear energy, the conferees made the pragmatic calculation that nuclear will be part of our energy mix in the short term. But no matter how our electricity is generated, one challenge we face is delivering it effectively to its destination. For this reason, the conference report provides more than \$100 million to modernize and secure our national electricity grid.

“By almost tripling the amount of funding for grid-connected energy storage and cyber security the conferees have recognized how closely our energy policy is tied to our national security. The energy portion of this conference report is only half the story, though. For my district and for people living in floodplains across the country, this energy and water conference report is a major victory. Funding for the Army Corps of Engineers is increased over both 2009 levels and over the President’s request - for a total of \$5.4 billion. For my constituents this funding can be a matter of life and death.

“My district is where the Sacramento and the American Rivers converge. As a result, Sacramento is the most at-risk city for major flooding in the United States. More than 440,000 people, 110,000 structures, the Capitol of the State of California and up to \$58 billion are at risk from flooding in my district alone. Nearly \$90 million of vital funding in this conference report will reinforce levees along the American and Sacramento Rivers to keep these national assets safe and dry.

“For all of Sacramento this means safer houses, more secure schools, better-protected community centers, and a higher quality of life. In South Sacramento specifically, efforts to provide that community with 100-year flood protection get a major boost with this conference agreement. I have worked on the South Sacramento Streams project throughout my career in Congress, and I am eager to see it move forward here today in this conference agreement.

“This is an example of a long-term project that Congress has historically supported, and that has paid off enormously for my constituents. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, federal levees currently provide a 6-to-1 return on flood damages prevented when compared to initial building cost. But the flood protection funding in this conference agreement is about more than just dollars and cents, M. Speaker.

“When I go home and walk along the Sacramento River - and when I look at the houses and schools and parks that sit right behind the levees - I am reminded of how vital the Energy and Water bill is. In many parts of the country, it can mean the difference between a thriving city and a disaster area. Flood protection is a regional undertaking, though. Floodwaters do not stop and start based on congressional district boundaries. That is why I am pleased that the conference report contains more than \$60 million to improve the ability of Folsom Dam to protect my constituents who live below it. This money will also help the Joint Federal Project to provide greater efficiency in managing flood storage in Folsom Reservoir.

“Around the whole country, from Sacramento out west to the Mississippi River Delta, from rural Ohio to the Bronx River Basin, this conference agreement protects our communities by investing in our aging infrastructure. And when we rebuild our infrastructure, we rebuild our economy. In my district alone, the Recovery Act has meant more than \$20 million already to keep my constituents safe from floods and to keep people working. The infrastructure funding in the conference report before us today will continue this pattern of creating jobs while investing in public safety.”

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